





Thursday, April 15, 2010

To the City of Saint Paul Planning Commission and City Council:

Enclosed are resolutions from the Riverview Economic Development Association (REDA), West Side Citizens Organization (WSCO), and Neighborhood Development Alliance (NeDA) that approve of the city staff recommendations for rezoning within the District del Sol Commercial Corridor dated March 3, 2010. This approval is the culmination of more than two years of work to build consensus for rezoning within the study area boundaries.

The zoning study was requested after our organizations conducted an informational meeting about TN zoning with community members within the potential study boundary and representatives from our three organizations. Included in the meeting were representatives from other neighborhoods where rezoning took place, City of Saint Paul staff, and resident leadership from REDA's Commercial Development Committee. Over 25 people attended and a majority of participants felt initiating a zoning study would be beneficial. Based on this reaction, REDA, NeDA, and WSCO submitted a joint resolution requesting initiation of a zoning study. Once City staff compiled an analysis of current zoning and proposed zoning, REDA and the City coordinated an additional informational meeting with representatives from REDA, NeDA, WSCO, and the residents and businesses within the zoning study boundaries. Again, the meeting was well attended, with over 30 participants. Together, REDA, NeDA, and WSCO represent engagement from over 50 community members that are active on our committees and boards.

During the meetings, one suggestion we suggest for consideration is the inclusion of auto repair services as a conditional use within TN2. Our community feels that auto repair is an important community service that must be integrated into pedestrian friendly streets: integrating auto repair into the framework of a transit friendly commercial corridor provides customers with options to connect to other areas of the city with public transit, and potentially creates incentive for customers to stop in local businesses while waiting for their car repair to conclude. We believe it is shortsighted to define all auto repairs within TN2 zoning as a nonconforming use and advise exploration of a conditional use allowance.

The resolutions before you are the result of concerted efforts to include and inform affected property owners. Our three organizations did a direct mailing and also called and e-mailed each property owner that was affected by the zoning study to notify them of the meeting and gain a sense of their perspective. Although initial concerns were voiced regarding ramifications for some businesses, through conversation with City staff community members felt that the proposed zoning changes would be beneficial for the neighborhood. To our knowledge, there are no business owners or residents that are opposed to the recommendations for the zoning change.

Thank you for your consideration of our community request

Sincerely,

Christopher Romano

Executive Director

REDA

Karen Reid

Executive Director

NeDA

Monica Bryand

Board President

wsco